

Special Number

English Edition.

Unpublished Manuscripts - Please reprint.

~ INTERNATIONAL ~ Vol. 2 No. 39 PRESS 19th May 1922 CORRESPONDENCE

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“When will the Workers’ World Congress Take Place?”

by G. Zinoviev.

The Workers’ World Congress will take place. The question is, however, *when* will it take place? The brutal offensive of world capital which is advancing on the entire line in all countries and is striking at the vital interests of all or almost all the workers of Europe and America urgently requires the union of the world proletariat. One of the steps on the path to the formation of a proletarian united front will be the Workers’ World Congress. The idea of such a congress has already won a firm footing in the masses of the workers. It is now only a question of whether the resistance of the leaders of the Second International, sabotaging the united front, will be broken now or these saboteurs of the proletarian united front will succeed in postponing the convocation of the Workers’ World Congress for a certain length of time and thus facilitate the “work” of capital, now pushing its offensive all over the world.

The Communist International has decided to demand a reply to this question under all circumstances at the May 23rd session of the so-called Commission of Nine, which was established at the Berlin Conference of the three Internationals.

The Communist International has carried on direct negotiations with the Second and 2½ Internationals for only a short space of time and none the less this period has already afforded us extremely valuable lessons. The clear and unequivocal question put by the Communist International has compelled the leaders of the Second International to unmask. Every thinking proletarian can now convince himself as to who really splits the labor movement and who is destroying the proletarian front. Every halfway class-conscious worker will draw the necessary political conclusions from the fact that in Berlin the leaders of the Second International demonstratively refused to proclaim the slogan of the revision of the piratical Treaty of Versailles and that the leaders of the 2½ International merely reprimanded their brothers of the Second very mildly therefor. Every worker who really is an honest supporter of the proletarian united front must understand, no matter what party he may belong to, that when the Second International consciously postponed the convocation of the Commission of Nine for several weeks—just at the time of the International Conference in Genoa—it proved that the leaders of the Second International are ready to comply with the instructions given them by the bourgeoisie.

It is now time, however, to review the results of the first phase of the struggle for the proletarian united front. We now put this question directly and ultimatively to the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals:—

“Are you at last ready to convoke the Workers’ World Congress in the near future in order to enable the workers to unite their forces against the offensive of capital? If not, we have nothing more to transact in the Commission

of Nine; we shall recall our representatives and will continue the fight for the proletarian united front independent of your attitude and against you. We have no intention of covering up lies. If you want to degrade the labors of the Commission of Nine to a comedy, we shall not permit it.”

The existence of the Commission of Nine is politically only then justified when the Second and 2½ Internationals are actually ready to take steps for the immediate convocation of the Workers’ World Congress. This was the single purpose of the establishment of the Commission of Nine; the Communist International sees no other function of the Commission. Our French Communist friends are greatly mistaken when they express an apprehension that the Commission of Nine has for its aim the establishment of some sort of “organic connection” between the Communist International on the one hand and the Second and the 2½ International on the other. There is no question of any sort of organic connection between Communists and Reformists. However, that need not hinder us from endeavoring to establish a united front with all workers who are adherents of the Second and 2½ Internationals, as well as those in the Anarchist, Syndicalist and even Christian organizations, and finally the non-party workers, as long as they all are ready to fight against the capitalists. The Communist International has commenced the campaign for such unity. And it will not cease until its efforts have been crowned with success. That, however, in no way means that the Communist International ought to retain its representatives in the Commission of Nine under all circumstances, even when its remaining in the Commission would only serve to cover the sabotage of the Second International.

“The fate of the Commission of Nine lies in your hands”, we declare to the Executives of the Second and 2½ Internationals. The further postponement of the convocation of the Workers’ World Congress will not be permitted by the Communist International. Yes or No! Are you ready to give your support to the convocation of a Workers’ World Congress which will facilitate the establishment of the proletarian united front in very large degree? Yes or No? There is no middle course. If you answer, “No”, you bear the entire responsibility, and the Commission of Nine ceases to exist.

This is the declaration of the Communist International as a whole.

The Communist Party of Russia has the following to say to the Second and 2½ International:—

“One of the points of the joint platform adopted at the Berlin Conference of the three Internationals concerns the demand for the support and defense of Soviet Russia. We know only too well that the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals adopted this slogan against their will

and only as a result of the pressure of their own workers who unanimously and in a real proletarian way sympathize with Soviet Russia. And we tell Vandervelde, Scheidemann and MacDonald frankly that we have no intention of holding them to their word. We are ready to strike out the demand of support for Soviet Russia from the joint platform so that the only demands remaining would be the struggle for the eight-hour day, the fight against unemployment and the capitalist offensive, and the like. Soviet Russia will live even without the 'support' of Vandervelde, Wels and Scheidemann, and even Bauer and Adler. Do not save us; do not save Soviet Russia, which will in some way or other manage to get along even without your 'help'! Save the workers whom you according to your own words 'represent'! Or, at least do not hinder these working masses when they defend themselves against the pressure of world capital. The tactics of the united front are not dictated by the interests of one country, even though it be the first proletarian republic in the world."

The tactics of the united front are dictated by the interests of the proletarian masses of all countries, and because of that we are ready to accept a platform which only contains demands such as the fight against the offensive of capital, the defense of the eight-hour day and the like. We will *not* tear up the Berlin Agreement in case the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals retract their promise of aid to Soviet Russia. We never took this promise seriously and placed no faith in it. However, if after all this obstruction and sabotage the Second and 2½ Internationals again attempt in the May 23rd session to obstruct the convocation of the Workers' World Congress or to postpone it to the Greek Calends, we shall certainly tear up the bond connecting us through the Commission of Nine and shall appeal to the workers adhering to the Second and 2½ Internationals.

However, what if the Commission of Nine suddenly falls asunder in the next few days as a result of the sabotage of our enemies? Would that mean that the tactics of the united front have been proven false? Whoever thinks so is a political infant. The Berlin Conference of the three Internationals is merely an episode in the fight for the united front, and the Commission of Nine, formed by it, which perhaps will not be able to accomplish any serious work at all, is nothing but a temporary detail in the fight for the united front. The collapse of the Commission of Nine will strengthen and not weaken the fight of the Communist

International for the united front. We will expose the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals with threefold energy and we will call with tenfold energy upon the workers adhering to these Internationals against their leaders for the establishment of the united front. The further development of the class-struggle which is intensifying from day to day will cause the workers to see that we are right and will drive them further and further to the formation of a proletarian united front regardless of the sabotage of the Social Democratic leaders.

We have no illusions upon the subjective intentions of the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals.

Only the most naive politicians or people who are actually dishonest can so represent the matter as if the united front is a sort of fraternal reconciliation between the Communist International and the leaders of the Second and 2½ Internationals. It is to be hoped that those comrades of the French Communist Party who venture so far as to assert that the tactics of the united front appear to them as almost a sort of ministerialism (in the old Millerand sense of the word) are now themselves ashamed of their (delicately speaking) levity. We did not doubt for a minute that the leaders of the Second International would continue to shoot down workers who demand bread and work from the bourgeoisie. The recent massacre of municipal workers in Berlin again showed us what we must expect. In the same way the infamous murder of Comrade Victor Kingisepp by the Esthonian "democratic" Government, which is in close connection with the Mensheviks and the Second International, illuminated the real policy of the leaders of the Second International like a flash of lightning.

And in spite of all that we declare we are ready to negotiate even with the leaders of the Second International in order to facilitate the union of the Communist workers with those who still follow the Social Democrats for the fight for a bit of bread against the capitalists who are insanely pressing their offensive and know no limit.

The Communist International ultimately demands of the Second and 2½ Internationals an answer to the question whether they are going to continue their opposition to the convocation of the Workers' World Congress.

If you desire to continue your sabotage of the united front assume the responsibility for this sabotage.

The proletarian united front will none the less arise. The Workers' World Congress will be held in any case and in spite of everything.